

fore setting him apart for his public work.

Viewing the case from a prudential standpoint, the solution seems easy. Admitting the divine right of the church (i. e., the local church) to call, license, and ordain her ministers, the conference, of which the church is a part, must be regarded as a body constituted by a wider application of the principles on which all the local churches comprising the conference are founded; and it is always wise and good to solicit and accept the aid of conference in endeavoring to render the best service to God. But it is especially so when standing at the threshold of such a momentous work as ordaining a minister.

I am inclined to look upon the movement toward a more careful modus in inducting ministers into office, with great satisfaction. We have already taken steps which have proved most successful, pointing to a general rule along this line. The inauguration of our present system of credentials was an advance. Indeed that passed far more easily than many of us expected. It must have looked most innocent in its infant attire. Well, I am glad to know that as far as the test of opposition goes it has firmly preserved its innocency. The credential system was just adapted by the Pennsylvania Conference about seven or eight years ago, and approved by the General Conference a few years later. It has worked well in Pennsylvania. The system is simple. The church furnishes her minister a paper signed by her deacons and clerk. This he presents to his District Conference, and it is placed with a committee, who examine it, and if found correct, the name of the minister is entered on the list for the seal of conference, and an annual license as an ordained elder. Every year since the credentials came into force I have been virtually examined by my District Conference, and have been actually licensed by the same body to exercise the office of elder in the church. All the ministers in Pennsylvania have been treated in the same manner and, to my knowledge, no one has ever objected. Why then, should we raise the cry of "violent, revolutionary and irrational legislation," over the movement to examine more closely at first into the qualifications of future applicants for the ministry, when we who have been years in the sacred office are re-examined and licensed every year? I cannot see. In passing let me refer the author of the intemperate words I have quoted, to the facts recorded in the word of God respecting the churches of Jerusalem, Antioch, Ephesus and Corinth, which all go to prove that there was a body organized, and in every essential particular similar to our conferences that had charge, by virtue of its official authority,

over students of prophecy, the examination of candidates for the eldership, ordaining, installing, removing and trying ministers of the gospel, and in general, over all that pertains to the order and spiritual welfare and prosperity of the churches from which it is formed. I would remind him too, that without any particular rule, the Brethren church has recognized these facts in New Testament history, as her book of precedents, and has been faithfully trying to act upon their deep ecclesiastical meaning.

But I have about said my say. I am in favor of this reform movement—heartily so. I would favor a movement also to re-examine, in a specific way, with I Tim. 3:1-7, as a guide, every minister on our existing roll, and pass on his competency. It might lay some of us aside, but it would be better for the church. One thing I would decidedly favor, viz., the deposition of that great army of honorary bishops, who are never heard of, except perhaps at their conferences, unless they formally agree to magnify their office by practical labor in the Master's cause.

LOYALTY TO CHURCH

A. J. HIXSON

Two years of active work in the home mission field have brought to mind many things in church work and church relation that we feel prompted to drop a few thoughts, especially for the consideration of the brethren and sisters of our own district, and such observations may not be amiss over the entire brotherhood. Loyalty in our church relations embraces a wide field. "Let your light so shine that others seeing your good works may glorify your Father which is in heaven." This implies relative relations to those around us, and demands very strict scrutiny as to walk and conversation. "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."

Indifference to church duties seems so apparent everywhere, and pastors and teachers complain so much along this line, many caring little whether they attend the weekly, semi-monthly or monthly services as the case may be. These things ought not so to be. "We are not to neglect the assembling ourselves together." The meetings of the church are for growth and development in divine things and cannot be safely neglected. First, on our individual account. Each member should be in his place at public services unless he has an excuse he can meet God in judgment with. If the weather is a little too warm or too cold for comfort ought not to be an excuse for absenting ourselves from the services. Secondly, we should be prompt on account of the relation exist-

ing between the pastor and his charge. Loyalty to each service is so encouraging to him in his efforts to feed the flock. It adds inspiration to his work, and the whole body is mutually benefited. Especially is loyalty necessary in the business meetings of the church. In the Brethren church a business meeting means much more than it meant in our former relation (this applies to us of G. B. relations) methods and means, with the sinews for putting them into successful operation are the demands of the business or council meeting. Yet how many stay away, excuse themselves often on very frivolous grounds; and to the liberal and big hearted it looks like a kind of nervous fear comes over them that a small requisition might be made upon the *pocketbook*. All that we have belongs to the Lord. "Covetousness is a sin." God desires that we should use all these good things with which he has blessed us for his glory.

A good brother writes, "Business meeting over, few in attendance, but little done. Circus show in town, one explanation." Brethren and sisters, there is a volume in that short sentence. Time and money for the show, but how about the ten cents per quarter for home mission work and another ten cents per quarter for the national work? You startle us says one, we can never stand it. Drop your coffee, tea, tobacco, cigars, and with some your *beer*, and turn it into the church avenues for blessing mankind and we could soon have missionaries in foreign fields, Ashland University endowed, our publishing interest well established, and meeting houses in the cities, and pastors for the same and well provided for. No doubt some are ready to cry out visionary—but there is nothing visionary about it. All that is needed is consecration and loyalty to the church and its great mission in the world, and it will all be effected. One of the most potent factors in this indifference is on the part of the pastor's timidity, a lack of keeping the question of *loyalty* before the members. Mission work nor educational work are ever spoken of publicly, but privately is heard: "so much needed at home," "can't support our college," it is too far away, and many other objections, all frivolous and without any weight.

Again, I want to say a word about our District and Annual Conference work. So many are raising objections without knowledge. Brethren, please make an effort to attend and acquaint yourselves with the object of these meetings, become enthused, filled with the spirit of the workers who attend these meetings, take it home with you, labor to impart to those around you, and you will be abundantly blest. The good and most zealous are the ones who are found at these meetings, and upon whom rests